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FIFTIETH SESSION

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FIFTH COMMITTEE
62nd meeting
held on
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at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 62nd MEETING

Chairman:

Mr. VILCHEZ ASHER

(Nicaragua)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative
and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 116: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1996-1997 (continued)

Progress report on the implementation of the programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997 (continued) (A/50/7/Add.16; A/C.5/50/57)

1. Mr. LOZINSKY (Russian Federation) said that his delegation welcomed the efforts made by the Secretary-General to enhance the efficiency of the Organization. At the same time, the form and content of the progress report (A/C.5/50/57) were very general and vague, and sometimes ran counter to the General Assembly's directives. Although the General Assembly had clearly specified, in resolution 50/214, that savings in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997 should not affect the full implementation of mandated programmes and activities, the Secretary-General indicated that delays and postponements caused by resource reductions were to be expected. Furthermore, there were no specific proposals on further measures to improve efficiency, contain administrative costs and achieve savings. Part III, section B, entitled "Programmatic and budgetary considerations" was very general and preliminary in nature although it was precisely in that area that Member States were entitled to expect specific and precise proposals and recommendations.
2. His delegation had already expressed support for the three-phase approach designed to enhance the efficiency of the Organization formulated by the Secretary-General. However, even the implementation of the first phase was not fully covered in the report. His delegation supported the Advisory Committee's comments on that question in paragraph 38 of its report (A/50/7/Add.16).
3. The vacancy rate proposed by the Secretary-General, particularly for Professional posts, was at variance with the General Assembly's recommendations. His delegation wished to know why it was necessary to increase the vacancy rate for Professional posts rather than resorting to other cost-saving options not linked with staff costs, since that step could have adverse consequences for the implementation of approved programmes. Furthermore, there was no indication in the report of the financial implications associated with the early separation programme or involuntary separations. In view of the current financial situation of the Organization, the implementation of those measures would have only a minimal impact in terms of savings. His delegation sought specific information on those programmes and in particular on their financial implications. At the same time it drew attention to the need to establish a more appropriate ratio of permanent to fixed-term contracts.
4. Despite the report's shortcomings, it was a step in the right direction. Taking into account the comments and recommendations made by Member States and the Advisory Committee, a concrete plan should be worked out to implement the current budget within the parameters laid down in General Assembly resolution 50/214.

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5. Mr. ZHANG Wanhai (China) said that his delegation fully supported the views put forward at the 60th meeting by the representative of Costa Rica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

6. The budgetary procedure laid down in General Assembly resolution 41/213 must be fully respected, including the provisions regarding additional expenditures and the contingency fund.

7. The budget laid down in General Assembly resolution 50/214 should not be treated as a ceiling. The work of the United Nations formed a whole; it was not possible to undermine some activities in order to finance others.

8. It was not clear from the report of the Secretary-General which specific activities and programmes of the United Nations would have to be postponed. According to General Assembly resolution 50/214, savings in the current budget should not affect the implementation of programmes and activities. Any postponement, cancellation or reduction of projects or programmes must be approved by the General Assembly.

9. The restrictions on the supply of paper and pencils in conference rooms caused serious inconvenience to delegations; his delegation hoped that the problem would be solved in the near future.

10. Mr. RODRIGUEZ PARRILLA (Cuba) said that his delegation's general position was reflected in the statement made by the Chairman of the Group of 77 and China. The item under consideration was of great importance since the outcome of the deliberations would determine the future of the budgetary process agreed upon by consensus in General Assembly resolution 41/213. The ambiguity and lack of detail in the report of the Secretary-General complicated the deliberations. His delegation agreed with the Advisory Committee that the report should have included more information, particularly regarding programmatic and budgetary aspects. It hoped that the final report would be presented in the normal budgetary format and would contain sufficient information to enable the General Assembly to take well-founded decisions.

11. The budgetary negotiations for 1996-1997 had been very complex, but they had led to a delicate and balanced agreement. His delegation hoped that there would be no attempt to renegotiate the agreed terms in order to advance domestic political agendas.

12. In resolution 50/214, the General Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to present a report containing proposals of possible savings for its consideration and approval. However, the Secretariat had already begun to implement various cost-saving measures which were inconsistent with the spirit and letter of the resolution. Clarification was therefore needed about the Secretariat's interpretation of the mandate given by the General Assembly, as well as clear and detailed information about the measures taken and the amounts involved.

13. Approval of the Secretary-General's proposal to increase the vacancy rate to 9 per cent for Professional posts and 7 per cent for General Service posts would amount to an across-the-board budget cut which would have a negative

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influence on the implementation of the legislative mandates and would contradict part II, paragraph 6, of General Assembly resolution 50/214. The demand by the Congress of the largest contributor for "certification" by the United States Secretary of State that the budget had not exceeded \$2,608 million before it approved its contribution to the Organization was not only contrary to the treaty obligations of Members of the Organization but also, if accepted by the General Assembly, would create a serious precedent: the extraterritorial application of a State's domestic legislation.

14. With regard to the alternatives proposed by the Secretariat to achieve the target vacancy rate, more information was needed on the costs and benefits of the early separation programme.

15. In recent years there had been a growing tendency to use personnel on loan to the Secretariat and external consultants. Although such persons were useful in certain circumstances, they did not represent a solution to the financial problems of the Organization: the maintenance of an efficient international civil service committed to the purposes and principles of the Organization was a condition sine qua non of its independent functioning. His delegation was concerned about the impact of the use of such persons on the impartiality of the Secretariat and the geographical imbalance created since the individuals came mainly from countries with the ability to finance them and were assigned to areas of particular interest to those countries, thereby distorting the priorities and programmes approved by the General Assembly. His delegation agreed with the Advisory Committee that there was also the potential danger of losing institutional memory.

16. Another notorious anomaly of the budgetary process was the role of the Efficiency Board. Judging by the normal behaviour of senior Secretariat officials, there appeared to be a tendency to ignore the decisions and opinions of the legislative bodies and to act in accordance with the wishes of a few Member States which had predominant power over appointments to the most senior managerial posts in the Organization. A specific example was requests for information about the Efficiency Board. Many delegations, including his own, had repeatedly requested information about the structure, function, sources of financing and mandate of the Board and had received no reply.

17. It was well known that the 1996-1997 programme budget had been approved in exceptional circumstances, and was a political agreement to solve the difficult situation faced by the Organization; however, the level of that budget could not prejudge the level of the programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999 or constitute a budgetary ceiling. The Committee could not renegotiate the budget or the budgetary process laid down in General Assembly resolution 41/213. If any delegation wished to modify or renegotiate part of it, his delegation would be forced to propose that it be renegotiated in its entirety, including the decision-making process itself. Consequently, the Committee could only consider concrete and tangible proposals by the Secretary-General to achieve additional savings, provided that the Secretary-General guaranteed that there would be no negative consequences for programmes and activities. The indications by the Secretary-General that reductions of that magnitude would inevitably require some reduction in services and that there would be delays and postponements in programme delivery were a clear demonstration that the Secretary-General was not

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able to make proposals in accordance with the mandate he had received from the General Assembly.

18. The reduction of the budget should not be an end in itself but should result in greater efficiency in the work of the United Nations translated into a better use of the resources allocated in the fulfilment of the mandates adopted.

19. Mr. ALOM (Bangladesh) said that his delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's commitment to implement the decisions taken by the General Assembly regarding the 1996-1997 programme budget. It fully endorsed the views put forward on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

20. It must be borne in mind that the United Nations programme budget was demand driven, and must respond to the needs of global society. The demand for programme activities was a constant factor which could not be changed. However, there was more flexibility in terms of supply, or resource generation, and the United Nations should take advantage of that flexibility in times of need. It was important to implement the budget in accordance with the mandated programme activities.

21. There were certain perceptions behind the demand for cost reductions and the generation of savings. One assumption was that the United Nations was disproportionate in size and that as a result there was duplication and overlap. While serious attention must be paid to unnecessary proliferation and overlap, it must be borne in mind that the United Nations was a multilateral body which dealt with a vast range of issues. The real challenge was to enable the United Nations to address the issues that were critical to the international community and ensure that all countries participated meaningfully in its work. Another perception was that the United Nations was a sprawling bureaucracy. The Secretariat was smaller than the civil service of many individual States. The size of the United Nations needed to be viewed in terms of the volume, complexity and diversity of its activities and of whether the staff was of a size and quality commensurate to the scope of the tasks. Staff cuts could be detrimental to the Organization. A third perception was that the expenditure of the United Nations was excessive; however, it represented a minuscule per capita amount and the total budget was less than the budget of many major cities. As had been noted by the Mayor of New York City, it was less than the combined budget for the police and fire departments of New York City. Improved efficiency in the use of financial resources was essential, but savings and rationalization of expenditure must be related to key variables and the objectives to be achieved. His delegation agreed with the view put forward in paragraph 30 of the Advisory Committee's report regarding loaned personnel.

22. He hoped that the points he had made would be taken into account in the process of cost reduction and enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the United Nations. Any large organization had some operating problems which needed to be viewed realistically, without taking any abrupt decisions. His delegation requested the Secretary-General to inform the Committee in detail about future courses of action and their likely impact on programmes so that the Committee could try to save the Organization from further deterioration.

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23. Mr. PALIZ (Ecuador) said that his delegation's position had been put forward by the representative of Costa Rica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. His delegation reiterated that any action taken to effect savings must not affect programmes already approved by the General Assembly: General Assembly resolution 50/214 could not be ignored.

24. The General Assembly must decide on any modification of the programmes and activities which had been approved. The Group of 77 and China had warned about the adverse consequences of any reduction in the 1996-1997 budget; the United Nations was now experiencing serious difficulties in implementing the activities approved by the General Assembly.

25. His delegation believed that reforms were needed in the United Nations to eliminate unnecessary expenditure and achieve greater efficiency. However, the political nature of the Organization, and the Purposes laid down in Article 1 of the Charter, must be borne in mind. Member States had a legal obligation to provide resources to achieve those Purposes.

26. Mr. VARELA (Chile), referring to the statement made by the representative of Costa Rica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, expressed concern that if budget cuts were to be more extensive, they could seriously affect the work of the Organization. While savings were necessary, it should be remembered that the United Nations, the main global political forum for dialogue and harmonization of views, was a political organization with 185 Member States. In order to ensure the multiplicity and diversity of interests, the Organization must be provided with full and efficient conference services with equal facilities for all the working languages. In that regard, he fully agreed with the concerns expressed by the Committee on Conferences in document A/C.5/50/66.

27. He was also concerned by the warning in paragraph 40 of the Advisory Committee's report that the cuts might lead to a general deterioration in the quality of virtually all United Nations activities if programme priorities were not carefully selected. It was especially important to avoid any deterioration of United Nations activities in the economic and social spheres, which constituted a real guarantee of establishing a friendlier world that could create the conditions for peace, prosperity and freedom to which all the membership aspired.

28. The Organization was committed, under the 1996-1997 programme budget, to ensuring that approved mandates should not be affected by the cost-cutting exercise. Since more than 70 per cent of expenditure was on personnel, the elimination of posts would undoubtedly affect some programmes and activities. Therefore, cost-saving measures should take into account the mandates of the major global conferences held in recent years. More background information was needed by Member States for them to take timely and informed decisions.

29. The incorporation of new technology into the work of the United Nations presupposed an improvement in productivity and efficiency. Therefore, delays in the delivery of such technology would also have undesirable effects that an administration looking to the future must avoid. In that respect also, further information was required.

30. He appreciated the excellent work of the Secretariat in presenting its provisional report on savings which could be generated through efficiency measures. Member States and the Secretariat had the legal basis necessary in order to implement the provisions of resolution 50/214. The quality of United Nations activities and programmes must not decline. The General Assembly, on the basis of information available, must take timely decisions to strengthen the democratic process enshrined in the Charter and resolution 41/213.

31. Ms. INCERA (Costa Rica) said it had been brought to her attention that a paragraph of the statement made by the Colombian delegation on behalf of the Group of 77 and China at the 60th meeting, had been omitted in the interpretation into English. She therefore wished to reiterate that procedures existed for the revision of the budget in order to include new mandates or extend mandates as well as for the financing of additional activities through the contingency fund. That occurrence demonstrated the importance of ensuring that adequate resources were made available for conference services; otherwise the quality of the Organization's work would be affected.

32. Mr. FONTAINE ORTIZ (Joint Inspection Unit), speaking on behalf of the Chairman of the Joint Inspection Unit, referred to the statement made by the delegation of Canada, on behalf of Australia and New Zealand, and the statement made by the delegation of Mexico. Paragraph 7 of the Secretary-General's report (A/C.5/50/57) concerning the Joint Inspection Unit, was incomplete and misleading. It was hard to understand why the Unit had been singled out since it was not the only oversight body that had not proposed any reduction. While General Assembly resolution 50/214 had asked the Secretary-General to ensure fair, equitable and non-selective treatment of all budget sections, it had not explicitly meant that the Secretary-General's proposals should be applied evenly across the board.

33. JIU had stated in its correspondence with the Secretariat that resolution 50/214 was comprehensive and should be implemented with respect for the full legislative history leading to its approval. Referring to part III, paragraph 65, of resolution 50/214, he said that, in the Unit's opinion, it was a clear mandate to the Secretary-General to be attentive to the Unit's needs as reiterated in several General Assembly resolutions, in particular resolutions 43/221, 45/237 and 48/221. The Unit looked forward to the Secretary-General's implementation of that mandate. The provision of part III, paragraph 64, precluded any cost-saving measure related to JIU staff expenditure. The Unit was still waiting for the Secretary-General to take action before June 1996 to fill the four vacancies in its secretariat. Since staff costs were some 89.9 per cent of the total JIU budget, the implementation of the Secretary-General's proposal to save \$540,000 without reducing staff would have required a 55.41 per cent reduction from non-staff expenditures, which was unrealistic. The Unit thanked the Group of 77 for understanding why JIU should be excluded from the current exercise.

34. Referring to part I, paragraph 8, of resolution 50/214, he said that the resolution had also endorsed the request of the Advisory Committee that the Secretary-General should report on what he and the executive heads of participating organizations had done to consider giving JIU extrabudgetary resources and programme support. As far as JIU knew, no steps to that end had

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been taken; it therefore looked forward to the Secretary-General's action on that directive. The different status of JIU had been recognized by the Secretary-General in implementing the recommendation made by the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts to Review the Efficiency of the Administrative and Financial Functioning of the United Nations in 1986 for a reduction of 15 per cent in the United Nations staff, as requested by General Assembly resolutions 41/213 and 42/211. The United Nations share of the Joint Inspection Unit's budget was about 21.34 per cent. Therefore, about 78.66 per cent of any savings would have to be reimbursed to the Unit's other participating bodies. The proposed measures to cut the JIU budget would contradict the General Assembly's directives.

35. The Unit had reiterated several times to the United Nations Secretariat that it would strive to undertake internal cost-saving measures in order to assist in easing the financial difficulties faced by Member States. Recently, it had informed the Secretariat that it had projected savings of \$148,000 in 1996, representing some 3.9 per cent of its annual allocation.

36. Mr. HANSON (Canada) said that the Joint Inspection Unit's mandate did not include the prerogative of sitting in judgement on the actions of Member States. He did not share the view that an exception must be made for the Joint Inspection Unit from the provisions of resolution 50/214. Had it been the General Assembly's intention to make an exception for any particular entity, such entity would have been named in the resolution. Therefore, he looked forward to the Joint Inspection Unit's full cooperation with the Secretary-General in his attempt to achieve savings in the programme budget.

37. Mr. CONNOR (Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management), replying to questions raised at the previous meeting, said that the vacancy rates of 9 per cent for Professional staff and 7 per cent for General Service staff were the result of projections by programme managers as to the level of vacancies required to achieve the mandated level of savings under resolution 50/214. As the preponderance of costs in the regular budget related to posts, the required reduction of \$104 million could not be achieved without savings in staff costs. That level could not be achieved without a vacancy rate in excess of 6.4 per cent. The programmatic justification for the increased rates was based on the attempt to fulfil all mandates. The efficiency gains made should still allow the delivery of all mandated programmes.

38. In response to a question raised about the criteria for the reductions in the various budget sections, he noted that the reductions had been distributed proportionately among the various sections of the budget in line with General Assembly resolution 50/214. The only exception related to section 20, where reductions had been made to conform with paragraph 35 of resolution 50/214, which had called for the maintenance of the same budgetary level as in the biennium 1994-1995.

39. Concerning the request for the clarification of the terms "delayed", "deferred" and "postponed" and for a list of activities affected, he noted that the deadline imposed on the Secretary-General for the submission of his preliminary report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997 (A/C.5/50/57) did not allow such detailed information to be provided. The

subsequent report to the fifty-first session of the General Assembly would provide such details as well as proposals for savings. While it was anticipated that some outputs would be delayed and produced later in the biennium 1966-1997 than originally planned, there were others whose production would be deferred or postponed from the current biennium to the following biennium. Programme managers would endeavour to minimize postponements, delays and deferrals.

40. Concerning the impact of the post vacancy situation on the 1998-1999 budget outline and the related programme budget, preparations would be guided by the requirements of annex I of resolution 41/213, which established the budgetary procedure. However, it provided no guidance on vacancy rates. The Secretary-General would take into account all relevant facts when formulating his proposal for the programme outline.

41. With respect to the treatment of representation allowance in the current financial situation, he said that initial payments of those entitlements had been due in early January 1996 but had been withheld, pending improvement in the overall financial situation. The allowance would now be paid by the end of May.

42. As to what the Secretary-General was expecting from the General Assembly after the consideration of the report in document A/C.5/50/57, he said that since the report had been produced in response to a specific request of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General expected the General Assembly to provide him with such guidance as the Assembly deemed appropriate.

43. On the question of why the budget of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) had been reduced more than that of other regional commissions, he said that the reduction applied was close to the midpoint of reductions for the regional commissions. Concerning the proposed reductions for the Department of Administration and Management, he said that his own office had been reduced by 5 per cent, the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts by 6 per cent and the Office of Human Resources Management by 4 per cent. Support services had been reduced by 3 per cent. Those reductions had been pragmatic. Of the specific reductions mandated, \$18.5 million had already been cut in December 1995 by the Fifth Committee, \$8 million of which related to support services. Accordingly, if that amount was taken into account, the reduction in funding for support services would be on the order of 6 per cent. Furthermore, in the budget adopted in December \$3.7 million had been cut from construction, alteration and improvement.

44. Responding to the questions raised about the early separation programmes, he said that the 1995 programme had been developed to give the Organization the flexibility it needed to meet its senior staff needs and diversify its mix of skills in order to keep pace with the evolving requirements of the global Secretariat. The compensation packages had been developed to minimize the negative impact of the early separation programme on departing staff, particularly in terms of pension benefits.

45. As part of the Secretary-General's effort to achieve the desired vacancy rates and cost reductions in the implementation of the programme budget, every effort had been made to maximize natural attrition and to minimize the involuntary separation of staff, which would not only be costly but would also

delay the implementation of the budget resolutions. Staff members who were due to liberate posts identified for suspension were therefore given first priority in the selection process.

46. With regard to the funding of the early separation programme, the estimated \$15 million which the programme would cost in 1996 would be found from the provision made for common staff costs. In terms of composition, the original total of 115 posts for 1995 had been increased to 246 in the light of General Assembly resolutions 50/214 and 50/215 in order to raise the vacancy levels and find the savings required by those resolutions.

47. Approximately 143 staff members would be included in the ongoing 1996 programme. The aim was to enable the Secretary-General to freeze posts, reach mandated savings and, in some cases, accommodate other staff awaiting redeployment. As to the Professional staff participating in the programme, nationals of 41 countries were involved; the gender breakdown was 36 men and 19 women and 25 men and 7 women for 1995 and 1996, respectively. Upon completion of the 1996 programme, the data would be made available to the Committee in informal discussions.

48. Given the considerably lower vacancy rate for the General Service category, the focus of the 1996 early separation programme was on General Service staff. With respect to the vacancy rate for Professionals, however, the target to the end of 1997 would be met as far as possible through normal attrition, voluntary separations (largely through the buy-out programme), redeployment and, finally, involuntary separations, where staff in posts identified for redeployment could not be matched with job requirements in other areas of the Secretariat. The administration was currently in the process of finalizing the 1996 early separation programme, which involved the identification of staff for redeployment and putting together the compendium of posts for which they could apply.

49. Every effort was being made to minimize involuntary separations and to avoid a "brain drain", which would cause the Organization to lose qualified, long-serving staff who could still contribute effectively to its work. It was important not to lose the investment which the Organization made in training its staff. Performance, mobility, training and linguistic skills were therefore key considerations in reviewing staff included in the redeployment programme.

50. With regard to the legal justification for involuntary separations, it was necessary to reduce expenditure on staff in order to achieve the savings mandated by the General Assembly. If voluntary staff reductions could not achieve the necessary savings, the Secretary-General would be compelled to resort to the power given to him by staff regulations 9.1 (a) and (b) to terminate appointments if the necessities of the service required reduction of the staff.

51. As for the rationale for the ongoing freeze in recruitment and the exceptions being made in order to continue to recruit successful candidates from national competitive examinations and to meet specialist and technical needs which could not be met internally, he said that external recruitment was a last resort in such cases. By continuing to recruit candidates from national

competitive examinations, the Secretary-General was seeking to sustain the lifeline of the core international civil service, a concern which was generally shared by Member States. The national competitive examination process also sought to address the long-standing concerns of Member States with respect to unrepresented and underrepresented States. Experience had shown that it was extremely unwise to halt that valuable intake of staff because of an ad hoc situation. Maintaining the intake was also a signal of confidence on the part of the Secretary-General that, with effective management and the support and guidance of the Member States, the important work of the global Secretariat would be sustained in the years ahead.

52. Replying to questions relating to the efficiency reviews and the Efficiency Board, he said that information regarding the terms of reference and the role of the Efficiency Board had been published in document ST/SGB/281 and in annex VI of the report of the Advisory Committee on the programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997 (A/50/7/Add.16). While the Secretariat was seeking to reduce cost in the short term by finding more efficient ways of doing things, the majority of the more than 300 issues proposed by programme managers and the thrust of cross-cutting reviews were directed at finding ways to achieve efficiency gains over the long term. Information technology, on which the future of the Organization depended, was one example of short-term investment for long-term gain.

53. On the question of whether the Efficiency Board would be disbanded if it had to be funded from the regular budget, he noted that the Board's cost was so minimal compared to its benefits to the Organization that there was currently no plan to disband it. However, the scope of the Board's efforts had increased and it was operating on such a shoestring of voluntary contributions that the lack of any plans to institutionalize it gave cause for some concern. It had been possible to staff the working group of the Board through the generous commitment of experts and fellows from some 30 countries. A trust fund had also been established to cover the incidental costs of the Board and to support the participation of experts from developing countries. To date the fund had received pledges of over \$60,000. All voluntary contributions to the efficiency exercise, whether in cash or kind, would be reported to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

54. Concerning the planned targets for efficiency reviews and the relationship between such reviews and budget reductions, in order to achieve the budget reductions mandated by the General Assembly, every programme manager had been given a proportional budget reduction in order to achieve overall budget reductions of \$154 million. At the same time, programme managers had been asked to conduct efficiency reviews in order to identify savings and increase their effectiveness with a view to mitigating the impact of budget cuts. The Organization welcomed the challenge of achieving more with less resources and programme managers were being trained to re-evaluate their projects.

55. The Efficiency Board had so far focused primarily on departmental studies aimed at enhancing the efficiency of the delivery of mandated programmes. That phase was nearing completion and the second phase consisted of a series of cross-cutting reviews on such topics as human resources management, information technology and documentation. In the future, the Board would advise the

Secretary-General on areas where there might be duplication and overlap and where mandated programmes might be providing the least value for Member States.

56. Ms. INCERA (Costa Rica), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that, regrettably, the Under-Secretary-General had failed to address all the concerns raised by the Group of 77 and China. She hoped that answers to the remaining questions would be provided in plenary meeting and that the measures being proposed by the Secretariat would not affect the full implementation of mandated programmes and activities, as provided for in General Assembly resolution 50/214.

57. Mr. ODAGA-JALOMAYO (Uganda) said that the replies given by the Under-Secretary-General constituted a good basis for subsequent discussions. As the representative of a developing country, he hoped that it would be possible to restore pencils and paper to conference rooms as the financial situation of the Organization improved. Finally, it was important for the Secretariat to consider the full impact of re-engineering as it explored that modality of achieving savings.

The meeting rose at noon.



UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FIFTIETH SESSION

Official Records

FIFTH COMMITTEE
63rd meeting
held on
Tuesday, 21 May 1996
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 63rd MEETING

Chairman:

Mr. AMARI
(Vice-Chairman)

(Tunisia)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative
and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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Commitments in respect of new mandates (continued)

OTHER MATTERS

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In the absence of Mr. Vilchez Asher (Nicaragua), Mr. Amari (Tunisia), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 116: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1996-1997 (continued)

Commitments in respect of new mandates (continued) (A/C.5/50/67)

1. Ms. INCERA (Costa Rica), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group had taken note of the contents of paragraph 16 of document A/C.5/50/67, in which the Secretary-General had reiterated his decision to implement fully the programmes and activities included in the programme budget approved by the General Assembly for the biennium 1996-1997. The position of the Secretary-General was in keeping with the decisions contained in resolution 50/214, which clearly stated that changes to programmes and activities were the prerogative of the General Assembly.
2. The Group of 77 and China had noted with concern the Organization's difficult financial situation and the Secretary-General's problems in implementing new mandates given the budgetary reductions previously decided by the General Assembly.
3. The Group had on several occasions endorsed the complete validity of the budgetary process as approved in General Assembly resolution 41/213 and it considered that expenditures generated within that framework should be addressed in accordance with the procedure articulated therein.
4. She also noted the Secretary-General's assertion that it would be impossible for him to absorb expenditures within the resource limits approved in resolution 50/214 and indicated that no agreement had been reached on possible means of absorbing such expenditures. Nevertheless, as a compromise formula, the Group of 77 and China would be willing to support a decision authorizing the Secretary-General to enter into commitments for the implementation of the United Nations International Civilian Mission in Haiti (MICIVIH), the United Nations Mission for the Verification of Human Rights and of Compliance with the Commitments of the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights in Guatemala (MINUGUA), the United Nations Office of Verification (ONUV) and the Commission of Inquiry for Rwanda in the amounts requested. Such a decision would also request the Secretary-General, in the context of the report on the implementation of the budget, to present the amount of the additional resources required on the basis of the real capacity of absorption.
5. Mr. GELBER (United States of America) said that his delegation had focused special attention on the Secretariat's claimed inability to absorb the cost of several programmes within the existing budget, and had been troubled by the underlying assumption that the Secretary-General would be unable to fund a number of programmes without additional assessments. Such an assertion implied an inability to stay within the \$2.608 billion budget level for the current biennium.

6. The report had failed to explore the option of cost-effectiveness. Many of the activities carried out by the Secretariat had explicit legislative mandates, but none of those mandates specified in precise detail how they were to be implemented. His delegation was convinced that opportunities existed to carry out the Organization's business more efficiently and at less cost.

7. His delegation's objective was to press for the efficient accomplishment of agreed business. His Government had been encouraged by the statement of the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management to the effect that the Secretary-General intended to deliver mandated activities fully, but with the realization that cost reductions could not be achieved while implementing the full programme of work as originally envisaged.

8. It was the view of his delegation that the programme of work as originally envisaged had to be examined for inefficiencies and ineffectiveness; adjustments should then be made, thereby achieving cost savings. Member States would have to work together to determine which programmes no longer served their original purpose. His delegation believed that the Secretary-General was best placed to identify such programmes.

9. He proposed that the remarks introducing the Secretary-General's report should be endorsed. The report could then be interpreted to mean that the Secretary-General was confident that he would be able to operate within the budget. With regard to the programmes referred to in document A/C.5/50/67, he believed that with modest effort resources could be found to fund them. It was inconceivable to his Government that space could not be found for them within the existing budget.

10. In times of financial stringency, Member States had the obligation to exercise maximum of fiscal responsibility. His delegation would continue to work with others to identify and eliminate unnecessary and low-priority activities. While not in a position to agree to any expenditures that would demand more resources from Member States, at the same time his Government considered it necessary to proceed with the valuable programmes outlined in document A/C.5/50/67.

11. Regarding intergovernmental action, the forthcoming meeting of the Committee for Programme and Coordination would enable delegations and the Secretariat to identify unnecessary and low-priority activities.

12. Mr. ODAGA-JALOMAYO (Uganda) endorsed the statement that had been made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, but wished to stress his delegation's concern at the apparent discrepancy between the actual report of the Secretary-General and the introductory remarks which had prefaced it. The Secretary-General had stated on a number of occasions that the cost of certain programmes could not be absorbed within the budget, yet the introductory remarks to his report implied that such absorption was indeed possible. Moreover, the introductory statement had given the impression that the views of Member States which had been sought in informal consultations were the views which would henceforth be implemented. But views put forward during informal meetings were purely consultative in nature and had to be submitted to all Member States for consideration and approval during a formal meeting. It appeared that undue

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emphasis had been placed on the views of certain delegations; any views arising in informal meetings should be reflected equally or not at all.

13. He hoped that no attempt would be made to abandon the budgetary procedures which had been so carefully worked out in General Assembly resolution 41/213; any attempt to do so would immensely complicate the entire budget process. His delegation also opposed a selective implementation of resolution 41/213; it should be implemented as a package or not at all. In any event, Member States should not try to change the budget as they went along, nor should they embark on an endless debate about which programmes should be spared and which should be cut. All delegations should respect each other's political interests.

14. With regard to the programmes referred to in document A/C.5/50/67, additional funding might be necessary. His delegation was therefore not in a position to take note of the introductory statement to the Secretary-General's report.

15. Ms. GOICOCHEA (Cuba) said that her delegations position was to allocate the additional resources requested by the Secretary-General. The General Assembly had reaffirmed the mandates of the missions in question, which in itself indicated their vital importance. In addition, their funding had already been cut and the Secretary-General had made it clear that he would be unable to absorb the additional savings requested. Her delegation believed that he had fully lived up to his commitments to the General Assembly. She also endorsed the remarks made by the Ugandan delegation regarding the unequal treatment of the different views on the question of cutting funds for old mandates in order to finance new ones, as reflected in paragraph 12 of document A/C.5/50/67. In addition, she supported the view that General Assembly resolution 41/213 should be implemented as a package on the basis of consensus. A selective implementation was out of the question since it would ultimately entail renegotiating the entire budget procedure.

OTHER MATTERS

16. The CHAIRMAN, responding to questions raised by a number of delegations about the availability of stationery in conference rooms, said that the matter would be taken up by the Bureau of the Fifth Committee.

The meeting rose at 4 p.m.



UNITED NATIONS
General Assembly
FIFTIETH SESSION
Official Records

FIFTH COMMITTEE
64th meeting
held on
Friday, 31 May 1996
at 6.30 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE FIRST PART* OF THE 64th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. VILCHEZ ASHER (Nicaragua)

later: Mr. AMARI (Tunisia)
(Vice-Chairman)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and
Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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- AGENDA ITEM 116: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1996-1997 (continued)
AGENDA ITEM 118: JOINT INSPECTION UNIT (continued)
AGENDA ITEM 122: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING FORCES IN THE
MIDDLE EAST (continued)

(a) UNITED NATIONS DISENGAGEMENT OBSERVER FORCE (continued)
(b) UNITED NATIONS INTERIM FORCE IN LEBANON (continued)

* The summary record of the second part of the meeting, to be reconvened
at a later date, appears as document A/C.5/50/SR.64/Add.1

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A/C.5/50/SR.64
28 June 1996
ENGLISH
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96-80712 (E)



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The meeting was called to order at 9.55 p.m.

1. Mr. THORNE (United Kingdom) said that his delegation had received the legal opinion which it had asked for in connection with the borrowing of funds from peace-keeping operations in order to finance other activities, and delegations could obtain a copy of it in the conference room.

AGENDA ITEM 116: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1996-1997 (continued)
(A/C.5/50/L.61, A/C.5/50/L.66 and A/C.5/50/L.71)

Draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.61

2. Ms. ROTHEISER (Austria) introduced draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.61, entitled "Implementation of the programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997", and recommended that the Committee should adopt it without a vote.

3. Draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.61 was adopted.

4. Ms. INCERA (Costa Rica), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and in explanation of position, said that she acknowledged the fundamental importance of the reaffirmation of the budget process as approved in General Assembly resolution 41/213 and programme planning regulation 5.2, and the recognition that Member States could only propose changes to mandated programmes and activities in the context of intergovernmental negotiations. Paragraph 5 of the resolution was likewise of great importance because it implied that the Secretariat would maintain existing hiring practices, including the hiring of short-term personnel, which meant that the principle of equitable geographical distribution would be guaranteed. The Group was also pleased that the Fifth Committee had recognized that the programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997 did not constitute a precedent and it hoped that the Secretariat's budget proposals for the following biennium would adhere to the guidelines in resolution 41/213. Finally, the report requested in paragraph 2 of the draft resolution was awaited with interest because it would enable the General Assembly to legislate on economy measures as decided in its resolution 50/214.

5. Referring to paragraph 51 of part III of General Assembly resolution 50/214, which requested the Secretary-General to appoint a deputy to the Secretary of the Fifth Committee as soon as possible and no later than the beginning of the first part of the resumed fiftieth session, she recalled that the need to strengthen the secretariat of the Fifth Committee had been recognized by all, including the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. She therefore wished to receive an explanation as to why the General Assembly's decision on the matter had not been implemented. Moreover, the proposal to cut one General Service post was inconsistent with the wish to strengthen the secretariat, and on no account would her delegation accept further cuts in the meagre resources available to the secretariat since it was responsible for servicing both the Fifth Committee and the Committee for Programme and Coordination.

Draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.66

6. Mr. KELLY (Ireland) introduced draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.66, entitled "Implementation of the programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997" and, after indicating that the Committee had taken note of paragraph 12 of the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/C.5/50/67 and adding that Member States had been unable to reach agreement on the cost reductions mentioned therein, recommended that the Committee should adopt it. It was his view that the draft was a consensus text.

7. Mr. GELBER (United States of America) said that his delegation had serious reservations about the draft resolution, which contained no detailed proposals on how the additional expenditure of \$25 million in respect of new activities would be absorbed. His Government could not accept any measure which would result in an increase in the budget expenditures approved for the biennium 1996-1997. In the circumstances, it was unnecessary to enter into additional commitments, which was why his delegation had joined the consensus, but he requested the Secretary-General to propose savings to offset the proposed expenditure as soon as possible, without waiting until 1 September 1996. He reminded the Committee that the United States would be unable to pay contributions of \$80 million unless the budget ceiling was respected.

8. Draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.66 was adopted.

9. Mr. MANCINI (Italy), speaking on behalf of the European Union, supported by Mr. HANSON (Canada), said that, with regard to the statement made by the representative of the United States of America, it should be recalled that all Member States were obliged to pay their contributions in full, on time and without conditions.

10. Ms. INCERA (Costa Rica), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and in explanation of position, said that she would have expected the Fifth Committee to approve the amounts requested by the Secretary-General to carry out activities in Guatemala, Haiti, El Salvador and Rwanda and regretted that it had not done so. She hoped that the necessary appropriations would be approved in the context of the performance report and that in future, when new expenditures were to be authorized, due account would be taken of their nature. As the Secretary-General had stated, if the Secretariat was to achieve further savings it would be unable to fulfil its functions, which was unacceptable to the Group of 77 and China. They therefore fully endorsed paragraph 2 of the draft resolution and hoped that the Secretary-General would take account of the provisions of paragraph 3 in seeking possible means of absorption.

Draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.71

11. Mr. MADDENS (Rapporteur) introduced draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.71, entitled "Conference servicing of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change", and said that it was a logical progression from draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.66. He requested the Committee to adopt it without a vote.

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12. Draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.71 was adopted.

13. Mr. GELBER (United States of America), speaking in explanation of position, regretted that ways to finance expenditure relating to conference services without exceeding the budget appropriations had not been specified in the resolution and requested the Secretary-General to provide such information as soon as possible.

14. Mr. GOKHALE (India) said that although his delegation had joined the consensus, it had done so on the understanding that the issue would be settled in accordance with resolution 41/213, which defined the procedure for preparing the Organization's budgets.

15. Mr. RAMLAL (Trinidad and Tobago) recalled that the General Assembly had decided in its resolution 50/115 to include in the calendar of conferences and meetings for 1996-1997 the sessions of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its subsidiary bodies, and that the Fifth Committee had subsequently decided that conference services for all meetings of the Conference would be funded from the regular budget. His Government had joined the consensus for practical reasons stemming from time considerations on the understanding that the adoption of the draft resolution would ensure full funding for all services provided for meetings of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies during the biennium 1996-1997.

16. Mr. STEIN (Germany) said that he supported the statements made by the representatives of India and Trinidad and Tobago.

17. Mr. TOYA (Japan) stressed that the draft resolution just adopted would not have any negative implications for future meetings.

AGENDA ITEM 118: JOINT INSPECTION UNIT (continued) (A/C.5/50/L.64)

Draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.64

18. Mr. MARCONDÉS DE CARVALHO (Brazil) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the Chairman and recommended that the Committee should adopt it without a vote.

19. Mr. Amari (Tunisia) took the Chair.

20. Ms. RODRIGUEZ ABASCAL (Cuba) said that the paragraph beginning with the words "Stressing the need ...", which had been deleted during the consultations, was still in the Spanish text and she requested that that error should be corrected.

21. The CHAIRMAN said that the Secretariat had taken note of the statement by Cuba and suggested that the Committee should adopt the draft resolution.

22. It was so decided.

23. Draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.64 was adopted.

AGENDA ITEM 122: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING FORCES IN THE MIDDLE EAST (continued)

(a) UNITED NATIONS DISENGAGEMENT OBSERVER FORCE (continued)
(A/C.5/50/L.54)

Draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.54

24. Mr. BLUKIS (Lithuania), introduced on behalf of the Chairman draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.54, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Peace-keeping Forces in the Middle East: United Nations Disengagement Observer Force", which had been drawn up following informal consultations. He briefly summarized the contents of the draft resolution. The first four paragraphs dealt with the financial situation of the Force. Paragraphs 7 to 9, which were the most important ones, concerned the funds approved and the amounts assessed for the period from 1 December 1995 to 30 June 1997. In paragraph 7, the General Assembly would appropriate the amount of approximately \$16 million gross for the period from 1 December 1995 to 31 May 1996, which had been apportioned earlier for expenditures that the Secretary-General was authorized to incur. In paragraph 8, the General Assembly would appropriate the amount of approximately \$2.7 million gross and apportion that amount among Member States in accordance with paragraphs 8 to 10 of its resolution 50/20. In paragraph 9, it would appropriate the amount of approximately \$32.2 million gross for a period of 12 months beginning on 1 July 1996, to be assessed on Member States at the monthly rate of \$2,687,908 gross, subject to the decision of the Security Council to extend the mandate of the Force beyond 31 May 1996. He recommended that the Committee should adopt the draft resolution.

25. Draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.54 was adopted.

26. Mr. STEIN (Germany), speaking in explanation of his delegations's position, said that his remarks would apply to all peace-keeping operation budgets that would be approved at the current session and to the budget that had just been adopted, namely the budgets submitted under agenda items 122 to 125, 128, 131 to 137, and 167 to 169. Although his delegation had joined the consensus on all those budgets, it had reservations. All in all, the General Assembly would approve expenditures amounting to approximately \$1.3 million. It was known that those expenditures would not be completely covered by the contributions of Member States since one of them had announced its intention to limit its contributions to peace-keeping operation budgets to an amount that it considered appropriate. That unilateral decision would serve only to aggravate the already difficult financial situation facing the Organization at the current time and in the long term and would jeopardize the implementation of peace-keeping operations. In order to deal with those foreseeable consequences, during the informal consultations Germany had proposed limiting the expenditures that the Secretary-General would be authorized to incur to approximately 94 per cent of the amount estimated for the budget of each peace-keeping operation or, in other words, to freeze an amount corresponding to approximately 6 per cent of expenditures. Unfortunately, that idea had not received sufficient support within the Committee. His delegation, nevertheless, remained convinced that

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that question should be dealt with in the interest of the Organization. He wished to stress once again that Germany fully supported peace-keeping operations and therefore had joined the consensus. None the less, it was not prepared to take the place of other Member States which did not pay their contributions, nor was it prepared either to accept any change in its assessment under the current scale.

(b) UNITED NATIONS INTERIM FORCE IN LEBANON (continued) (A/C.5/50/L.67)

Draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.67

27. Mr. BLUKIS (Lithuania), speaking in his capacity as coordinator of the informal consultations on the question under consideration, said that, in spite of the intense efforts made by the delegations concerned, it had not been possible to arrive at a consensus on draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.67, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Peace-keeping Forces in the Middle East: United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon".

28. Mr. HAMDAN (Lebanon) recalled that an earlier version of the draft resolution had been distributed. The document in question had therefore been discussed, and differences of views had arisen only on a single paragraph. With the support of other Arab countries, his delegation had proposed amendments. Following numerous consultations with the delegations concerned and since Lebanon wished to avoid politicizing the work of the Committee and to promote efforts to reach a consensus in accordance with established practice, his delegation had forgone certain paragraphs and agreed to accept a general paragraph which referred to a practical procedure and had no restricting implications, namely paragraph 7. Accordingly, his delegation hoped that the Committee was currently in a position to adopt the draft resolution by consensus, with that version of paragraph 7.

29. The meeting was suspended at 10.50 and resumed at 11.55.

30. The CHAIRMAN said that, since it was difficult to reach agreement on draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.67, he proposed that the Committee should defer consideration of agenda item 122 (b) and the other agenda items until Monday, 3 June, at 3 p.m. Before adjourning the meeting, he invited the representative of Lebanon to introduce the draft resolution.

31. Mr. HAMDAN (Lebanon) said that his delegation, with the support of other Arab delegations, wished to formally introduce draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.67 in the Committee for adoption. His delegation had done everything possible in cooperation with the delegations concerned to reach a compromise. It had therefore agreed to withdraw certain amendments that it had put forward and to maintain only the amendment relating to paragraph 7, which requested the Secretary-General to include in his next report on the financing of the Force a full evaluation of damages resulting from the incident that had occurred at the headquarters of the Force in Qana, on 18 April 1996. The text did not contain anything that deviated from the current practices followed by the Committee.

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32. The CHAIRMAN said that, if there were no comments, the consideration of the draft resolution and the other questions would be deferred until Monday, 3 June, at 3 p.m.

The meeting rose at 12.15 a.m.

UNITED NATIONS
General Assembly
FIFTIETH SESSION
Official Records

FIFTH COMMITTEE
64th meeting
reconvened on
Monday, 3 June 1996
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE SECOND PART* OF THE 64th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. VILCHEZ ASHER (Nicaragua)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and
Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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(b) UNITED NATIONS INTERIM FORCE IN LEBANON (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 123: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS ANGOLA VERIFICATION MISSION
(continued)

AGENDA ITEM 124: FINANCING OF THE ACTIVITIES ARISING FROM SECURITY COUNCIL
RESOLUTION 687 (1991) (continued)

(a) UNITED NATIONS IRAQ-KUWAIT OBSERVATION MISSION (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 125: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS MISSION FOR THE REFERENDUM IN
WESTERN SAHARA (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 128: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS PROTECTION FORCE, THE UNITED
NATIONS CONFIDENCE RESTORATION OPERATION IN CROATIA, THE UNITED NATIONS
PREVENTIVE DEPLOYMENT FORCE AND THE UNITED NATIONS PEACE FORCES HEADQUARTERS
(continued)

* The summary record of the first part of the meeting, held on Friday,
31 May 1996, appears as document A/C.5/50/SR.64.

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AGENDA ITEM 131: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING FORCE IN CYPRUS
(continued)

AGENDA ITEM 132: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS OBSERVER MISSION IN GEORGIA
(continued)

AGENDA ITEM 133: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN HAITI (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 134: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS OBSERVER MISSION IN LIBERIA
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AGENDA ITEM 135: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS ASSISTANCE MISSION FOR RWANDA
(continued)

AGENDA ITEM 136: FINANCING OF THE INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL FOR THE PROSECUTION OF
PERSONS RESPONSIBLE FOR SERIOUS VIOLATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW
COMMITTED IN THE TERRITORY OF THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA SINCE 1991 (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 137: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS MISSION OF OBSERVERS IN
TAJIKISTAN (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 138: ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY ASPECTS OF THE FINANCING OF THE
UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS (continued)

(a) FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 149: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE
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AGENDA ITEM 159: HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 160: FINANCING OF THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL TRIBUNAL FOR THE
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(continued)

AGENDA ITEM 167: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN BOSNIA AND
HERZEGOVINA (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 168: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS TRANSITIONAL ADMINISTRATION
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AGENDA ITEM 169: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS PREVENTIVE DEPLOYMENT FORCE
(continued)

COMPLETION OF THE WORK OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE AT THE SECOND PART OF THE RESUMED
FIFTIETH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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The meeting was reconvened at 3.25 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 122: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING FORCES IN THE MIDDLE EAST (continued)

(b) UNITED NATIONS INTERIM FORCE IN LEBANON (continued) (A/C.5/50/L.67)

Draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.67

1. The CHAIRMAN informed members of the Committee that a vote had been requested on paragraph 7 of draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.67, which appeared in square brackets.
2. Mr. GELBER (United States of America), speaking in explanation of vote before the voting, said that his Government firmly supported the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), which had contributed greatly to reducing the violence in southern Lebanon. No other Government had worked as hard to bring calm to the Israel-Lebanon border and to ensure the protection of the civilian population.
3. His delegation had therefore been concerned at the proposals to amend the customary formulation of the resolution on the financing of UNIFIL, proposals which it saw as a regrettable attempt to politicize the Committee's work. The Qana tragedy and the context in which it had occurred had been the subject of resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council. The fact that an attempt was being made within the Committee to attribute responsibility for that tragedy in a partial manner would only obstruct the efforts made on all sides to advance the peace process. Moreover, tackling that kind of political issue, as paragraph 7 of the draft resolution implicitly did, could only compromise the Committee's ability to carry out its work. Adopting the draft resolution with paragraph 7 as it stood would set an extremely unfortunate precedent. The proposals which his delegation had made with a view to attenuating the political impact of the text of the draft resolution and preserving the tradition of adoption by consensus had all been rejected.
4. His delegation would therefore vote against paragraph 7 of the draft resolution, and against the draft resolution as a whole if that paragraph was adopted. It would, however, continue to support UNIFIL and it reaffirmed its commitment to respect for the full sovereignty, the independence, the territorial integrity and the unity of Lebanon within secure, internationally recognized borders. Lastly, it recognized the financial obligations which the adoption of the draft resolution would impose on the United States of America.
5. A recorded vote was taken on paragraph 7 of draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.67.

In favour: Algeria, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan,

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Kenya, Kuwait, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Monaco, Morocco, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Against: Israel, United States of America.

Abstaining: Chile, Republic of Korea.

6. Paragraph 7 of draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.67 was adopted by 82 votes to 2, with 2 abstentions.*

7. The CHAIRMAN said that a vote had been requested on draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.67 as a whole. The square brackets around paragraph 7 should be removed, since the paragraph had been adopted.

8. Mr. PELEG (Israel) said that his delegation had voted against paragraph 7 of the draft resolution and would vote against the draft resolution as a whole, because it introduced unnecessary political considerations into the Committee's discussions. With regard to paragraph 7, he emphasized that those really responsible for the Qana tragedy were the Hezbollah terrorists, who had shelled northern Israel repeatedly from positions close to UNIFIL headquarters.

9. A recorded vote was taken on draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.67 as a whole, as amended.

In favour: Algeria, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Monaco, Morocco, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great

* The Iranian delegation subsequently informed the Committee that it had intended to vote in favour of paragraph 7 of draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.67.

Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Against: Israel, Syrian Arab Republic, United States of America.

Abstaining: Iran (Islamic Republic of).

10. Draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.67, as amended, was adopted by 85 votes to 3, with 1 abstention.

11. Mr. AL-HARIRI (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his delegation had voted against the draft resolution in accordance with the principle, reaffirmed many times, that UNIFIL should be financed by the aggressor country, namely, Israel. For the same reason, it had voted in favour of paragraph 7, considering that the costs arising from the damage to UNIFIL headquarters must be assumed by Israel, the aggressor, in accordance with the relevant General Assembly resolution, and not by the Member States as a whole.

12. Mr. NAJEM (Lebanon) called for the immediate application of Security Council resolution 425 (1978), which had established UNIFIL and which demanded the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon. His delegation vigorously condemned the bombing of UNIFIL headquarters in Qana by the Israeli occupation forces and asked that steps be taken to ensure the safety of UNIFIL and its equipment. It was profoundly grateful to those delegations which had voted in favour of paragraph 7 of the draft resolution, and pointed out that, despite the Israeli aggression, the country which had voted against Lebanon in the Security Council and in the General Assembly had not changed its position, for reasons that were well known. His delegation reaffirmed that it had shown flexibility with respect to the text of the draft resolution, which had no political connotations. Only the negative position adopted by two Member States, in an attempt to cover up Israel's responsibility in the Qana massacre, was political.

13. Mr. MIRMOHAMMAD (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that his delegation had voted for paragraph 7 of the draft resolution, but had abstained in the voting on the draft resolution as a whole because it felt that the costs of UNIFIL should be borne by the party responsible and not by the Member States as a whole.

14. Mr. AMARI (Tunisia) read out the preambular paragraph and operative paragraph which had appeared in the original version of the draft resolution. The former simply reproduced a preambular paragraph from resolution 50/22 C, adopted by the General Assembly following the Qana incident, while the latter was based on a statement which the Controller had made to the Committee on 6 May 1996. His delegation considered it only normal that the Secretary-General should include in his report the costs of the damage to UNIFIL headquarters in Qana. In response to the political difficulties which those paragraphs had created for most delegations, the Group of Arab States had taken account of all the views expressed and had submitted a new, factual paragraph, which had become paragraph 7 and which was based on the statement by the official representative of the Secretary-General. He regretted that all efforts at conciliation had failed, and hoped that the vote which the Committee had been forced to take would not set a precedent.

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15. Mr. LOZINSKI (Russian Federation) said he regretted that the Committee had had to take a vote and that it had made an exception to the normal procedure of adopting resolutions on the financing of peace-keeping operations by consensus. He felt that the draft resolution could and should have been adopted without a vote.

AGENDA ITEM 123: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS ANGOLA VERIFICATION MISSION
(continued) (A/C.5/50/L.56)

Draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.56

16. Mrs. EMERSON (Portugal) introduced, on behalf of the Chairman, draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.56, which had been agreed upon in informal consultations. She recommended that it be adopted by consensus.

17. Draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.56 was adopted.

AGENDA ITEM 124: FINANCING OF THE ACTIVITIES ARISING FROM SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 687 (1991) (continued)

(a) UNITED NATIONS IRAQ-KUWAIT OBSERVATION MISSION (continued)
(A/C.5/50/L.47)

Draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.47

18. Mr. ALOM (Bangladesh) introduced, on behalf of the Chairman, draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.47, which was the outcome of informal consultations. He recommended that it be adopted by consensus.

19. Draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.47 was adopted.

AGENDA ITEM 125: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS MISSION FOR THE REFERENDUM IN WESTERN SAHARA (continued) (A/C.5/50/L.55)

Draft decision A/C.5/50/L.55

20. Ms. PEÑA (Mexico), introducing draft decision A/C.5/50/L.55, recommended that it be adopted without a vote, since it had been agreed upon in informal consultations.

21. Draft decision A/C.5/50/L.55 was adopted.

22. Mr. MOKTEFI (Algeria) said that one delegation had tried to make improper use of the Fifth Committee to obtain what it had been unable to obtain from the Security Council and the Fourth Committee, which were the competent bodies for dealing with the political aspects of the question of Western Sahara. That delegation was to blame for the fact that the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) was the only peace-keeping operation for which the Committee had been unable to recommend a financing resolution. He recalled that MINURSO was present in Western Sahara as part of the process of decolonizing that Territory and that a referendum was to be organized in accordance with the settlement plan endorsed by the Security Council. The

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identification phase of the referendum operation was currently at a standstill, not because of the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguia el-Hamra y de Río de Oro (Frente POLISARIO), but because of Morocco, which was categorically opposed to the principle of transparency. Algeria, which was directly concerned by the stability of the subregion, regretted the current deadlock, but felt that the latest Security Council resolution on the issue was encouraging because it stressed the need for the Secretary-General to pursue his efforts with both parties to find a way out of the deadlock.

23. Mr. MEDINA (Morocco) said that the Secretary-General had indicated in his report (S/1995/986) that the basic obstacle to continuing and completing the identification process was the refusal of the Frente POLISARIO to participate in the identification of certain tribal groups and persons not resident in the Territory. All of the reports which the Secretary-General had submitted to the Security Council on the subject indicated that Morocco was committed to the comprehensive implementation of the settlement plan. Morocco would take up the issue again in September and hoped that, in the meantime, an appropriate settlement would be found to the question of Western Sahara.

AGENDA ITEM 128: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS PROTECTION FORCE, THE UNITED NATIONS CONFIDENCE RESTORATION OPERATION IN CROATIA, THE UNITED NATIONS PREVENTIVE DEPLOYMENT FORCE AND THE UNITED NATIONS PEACE FORCES HEADQUARTERS
(continued) (A/C.5/50/L.60)

Draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.60

24. Mr. ABELIAN (Armenia), introducing draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.60, indicated that paragraph 17 of the draft resolution should be deleted. The Committee anticipated that the report requested from the Secretary-General in paragraph 7 would be submitted to it by 15 August 1996, that the Advisory Committee would consider the issue as a matter of priority and that its report would be available by the resumed fiftieth session in September 1996.

25. Draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.60, as orally revised, was adopted.

AGENDA ITEM 131: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING FORCE IN CYPRUS
(continued) (A/C.5/50/L.50)

Draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.50

26. Ms. ALMAO (New Zealand) introduced draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.50, on which the Committee had reached a consensus in informal consultations.

27. Draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.50 was adopted.

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AGENDA ITEM 132: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS OBSERVER MISSION IN GEORGIA
(continued) (A/C.5/50/L.49)

Draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.49

28. Mr. ABELIAN (Armenia) introduced draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.49, which was the outcome of informal consultations, and recommended that it be adopted without a vote.

29. Draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.49 was adopted.

AGENDA ITEM 133: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN HAITI (continued)
(A/C.5/50/L.53)

Draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.53

30. Ms. PEÑA (Mexico) introduced draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.53, which reflected the outcome of informal consultations, and recommended that it should be adopted without a vote.

31. Mr. ZHANG Wanhai (China) asked, with regard to paragraph 14, why the item that the General Assembly would decide to include in the provisional agenda for its fifty-first session was entitled "Financing of the United Nations Mission in Haiti", since in informal consultations delegations had agreed to refer to the financing of the liquidation of the Mission. He proposed that the word "liquidation" should be added to the title of the item.

32. Ms. PEÑA (Mexico) said that it had indeed been proposed in informal consultations that, in view of recent Security Council resolutions, the item should be entitled "Financing of the liquidation of the United Nations Mission in Haiti". But no consensus had emerged on that proposal and the title of the item had thus been retained as worded while awaiting more specific action by the Security Council on the future of the Mission.

33. Mr. HANSON (Canada) said that his recollection of the consultations accorded with that of the representative of Mexico: there had been no consensus on amending the title of the agenda item.

34. Mr. KELLY (Ireland) agreed with the representative of Canada and recalled that one reason why the proposed amendment had not gained unanimous support was that it was for the General Committee of the General Assembly to determine whether the title of an agenda item should be changed.

35. Mr. ZHANG Wanhai (China) said that given the objections by certain delegations he would withdraw his proposal so as not to hinder consensus. Nevertheless, he wished to draw attention to the existence of a precedent: at the forty-eighth session the title of the draft resolution on the Mission in Cambodia had been "Financing of the Mission in Cambodia" whereas the text had referred explicitly both to the financing and the liquidation of the Mission.

36. Draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.53 was adopted.

AGENDA ITEM 134: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS OBSERVER MISSION IN LIBERIA
(continued) (A/C.5/50/L.51)

Draft decision A/C.5/50/L.51

37. Mr. MAZEMO (Zimbabwe) introduced draft decision A/C.5/50/L.51, which reflected the consensus which had emerged in informal consultations, and recommended that it should be adopted without a vote.

38. Draft decision A/C.5/50/L.51 was adopted.

AGENDA ITEM 135: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS ASSISTANCE MISSION FOR RWANDA
(continued) (A/C.5/50/L.52)

Draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.52

39. Mr. MAZEMO (Zimbabwe) introduced draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.52, which reflected the outcome of informal consultations, and recommended that it should be adopted without a vote.

40. Draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.52 was adopted.

AGENDA ITEM 136: FINANCING OF THE INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL FOR THE PROSECUTION OF PERSONS RESPONSIBLE FOR SERIOUS VIOLATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW COMMITTED IN THE TERRITORY OF THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA SINCE 1991 (continued)
(A/C.5/50/L.62)

Draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.62

41. Ms. ROTHEISER (Austria), introducing draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.62, proposed two revisions to the text. In the fifth line of paragraph 2 the words "the period from 1 April to 31 December" would be added after the word "for", and paragraph 8 would be reworded to read: "Requests the Secretary-General to entrust the Office of Internal Oversight Services with undertaking, without prejudice to its programme of work, an inspection of the International Tribunal, with a view to identifying problems and recommending measures to enhance the efficient utilization of resources, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-first session;".

42. Draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.62, as orally revised, was adopted.

AGENDA ITEM 137: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS MISSION OF OBSERVERS IN TAJIKISTAN (continued) (A/C.5/50/L.48)

Draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.48

43. Mr. ABELIAN (Armenia) said that the draft resolution reflected a consensus and trusted that it could be adopted without a vote.

44. Draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.48 was adopted.

AGENDA ITEM 138: ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY ASPECTS OF THE FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS (continued)

(a) FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS (continued)
(A/C.5/50/L.65)

Draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.65

45. Mr. MADDENS (Belgium), Rapporteur, introducing draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.65, noted that the text before the Committee had been intensively discussed in informal consultations and recommended that it should be adopted without a vote. The draft resolution concerned reform of the support account, a matter debated at length by the Committee. Firstly, the ad hoc and temporary nature of the support account was confirmed since, under paragraphs 7 and 8, the Secretary-General would be required to substantiate each year, in his budget report for the following year, the total resource requirement and utilization. Secondly, the provisions contained in the fourth preambular paragraph, paragraphs 4 and 5, and paragraph 17 (e), would improve monitoring of the level of peace-keeping activity. Thirdly, noting that the current mechanism for maintaining the support account did not cover all commitments by the Secretariat for the backstopping of peace-keeping operations, the Committee was recommending, in paragraph 3, that the General Assembly should approve, on a provisional basis and for the period to 30 June 1997, a new funding mechanism. The provisional nature of that mechanism was reinforced by the decisions taken in paragraph 10.

46. For the year 1996-1997, paragraphs 17 and 18 made a slight adjustment to the Secretary-General's proposals regarding the staffing of the Department of Peace-keeping Operations, the Department of Administration and Management and the Office of Internal Oversight Services.

47. With regard to paragraph 17 (e), it should be recalled that members of the Committee had expressed the view that the level of peace-keeping activities should be followed more closely. Implementation would be left to the discretion of the Secretary-General, it being understood, however, that the provision would not apply to the secretariat of the Advisory Committee.

48. He drew attention to a drafting error. In the second line of paragraph 17 (e) the word "and" should be replaced by "including".

49. Mr. TAKASU (Controller) said that he wished, on behalf of the Secretary-General, to state the implications of adopting draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.65 on the support account and, specifically, of the abolition and establishment of posts provided for under paragraphs 17 and 18.

50. During the informal consultations certain delegations had expressed the view that the decisions provided for in paragraphs 17 and 18 were warranted and had argued that the Secretary-General had not conducted a proper review of support account requirements, and had denied that those decisions represented micro-management. The view had also been expressed that there must be a direct and immediate linkage between any fluctuations in the total dollar value of

peace-keeping operations and the backstopping workload and hence support account resource requirements at Headquarters.

51. He emphasized that, contrary to the views expressed by Member States, the Secretary-General had conducted a comprehensive review of support account requirements taking full account of the changing nature of the backstopping of peace-keeping operations at Headquarters. The results of that review were set out in the Secretary-General's report (A/50/876) and note (A/C.5/50/65), in which he had indicated his judgement of the minimum backstopping requirements for the 12-month period from 1 July 1996 to 30 June 1997. It was thus quite wrong to say that the Secretariat had not conducted a comprehensive review.

52. Moreover, the unprecedented level of specificity of the decisions contained in paragraphs 17 and 18 was indeed micro-management and impinged on the ability of the Secretary-General to assume his responsibility under the Charter to manage the resources made available to the Secretariat in the most efficient and economical manner. Such decisions would seriously hamper the capacity of the Department of Administration and Management which, together with the Department of Peace-keeping Operations, provided essential backstopping for peace-keeping operations.

53. There could also be no direct and immediate linkage between the notable decline in the total dollar value of peace-keeping operations between 1995 and 1996 and the backstopping workload and related support account resource requirements at Headquarters. In that connection, while the Secretary-General recognized, in paragraph 22 of his report (A/50/876) that a reduction in the level and scope and, thus, in the cost, of a number of active peace-keeping operations would eventually result in the decrease of backstopping activities, he also stressed that the number of operations requiring backstopping support (active, completed and closed missions) would increase from 23 in 1995 to 26 in 1996. It must be recognized that just as there was a "catch-up" period in the provision of backstopping staffing at the time of expanding peace-keeping operations, the adjustment, when justified by a decline in operations, should also be phased and orderly. In other words, the drop in the total dollar value of peace-keeping operations between 1995 and 1996 could not be immediately translated into a corresponding reduction in the workload at Headquarters and in support account resource requirements. That reduction must take place gradually.

54. Concerning staffing, the number of posts requested by the Secretary-General for 1996-1997, or 355, was the result of a careful and comprehensive review of the minimum requirements conducted throughout the Secretariat. Draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.65 provided for the creation of eight additional posts which had not been requested by the Secretary-General: two Professional posts in the Office of Internal Oversight Services and six Professional posts in the Mission Planning Service of the Department of Peace-keeping Operations. It also proposed suppressing 18 posts, which would bring the number of posts down to 345, or 10 posts less than the Secretary-General had proposed and 63 posts less than there had been in 1995 (which was also less than there had been in 1994).

55. Even more disturbing was the fact that, of the 18 posts to be suppressed, one was a General Service post in the Executive Office of the Department of

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Peace-keeping Operations, five were from various units of the Department of Administration and Management and 12 were to be decided on in departments other than the Department of Peace-keeping Operations. However, if the Department of Administration and Management was excluded, the other departments in question had only a few support account posts and it was therefore not feasible to suppress posts from those offices. In other words, the 12 posts referred to in paragraph 17 (e) would have to be found in the services of the Department of Administration and Management, in addition to the five posts already mentioned. A question then arose as to whether it was really possible to suppress 17 posts from the Department of Administration and Management in addition to the 22 posts which the Secretary-General had already proposed for reduction and, if so, at what price.

56. He wished to emphasize, on behalf of the Secretary-General, that while the Department of Peace-keeping Operations was responsible for operational support to peace-keeping missions, it did not carry out that task in isolation. It performed its functions under the authority of the Secretary-General and as it did not stand alone, the support and cooperation of other Secretariat services were indispensable.

57. If the draft resolution under consideration was adopted, 222 posts in the Department of Peace-keeping Operations would be financed from the support account compared to the 217 posts the Secretary-General had requested. In the Department of Administration and Management, there would be 102 posts, compared to 119 posts requested. Compared with the number of posts currently available, that represented a reduction by 10 per cent in the Department of Peace-keeping Operations and 28 per cent in the Department of Administration and Management.

58. The proposed decisions would set aside the outcome of the Secretary-General's careful review of the minimum requirements which had been agreed upon at the highest levels in the Secretariat. They would destroy the balance between the backstopping capacities of the Department of Peace-keeping Operations and those of the Department of Administration and Management and they would seriously hamper the capacity of the Department of Administration and Management to provide support and services to peace-keeping missions, the Department of Peace-keeping Operations and Member States.

59. He wished to make clear the consequences such post reductions would have on the provision of services. The preparation and submission of reports on, inter alia, the financing and implementation of peace-keeping operations budgets would be affected (that activity came under the Peace-keeping Financing Division). The ability to produce peace-keeping-related financial statements and reports would be impaired. It would no longer be possible to render ad hoc assistance to the Department of Peace-keeping Operations in its efforts to close the accounts of completed missions. Similarly, the measures contemplated would reduce the capacity of the Department of Administration and Management to recruit mission replacement personnel (a function which had not been delegated to the Department of Peace-keeping Operations), to ensure central management of human resources (planning, policy, training, medical support, interpretation of the Staff Regulations and Rules, litigation, investigation and disciplinary procedures) and to monitor the use made by the Department of Peace-keeping Operations of the authority delegated to it to develop generic job descriptions;

select, recruit and appoint staff for mission assignments, and extend the appointments of staff members recruited solely on mission assignment. Since almost all support account posts for the mail operations and telecommunications would be suppressed, the Office of Conference and Support Services would no longer be in a position to perform the services required of it. The ongoing procurement reform efforts would also be impaired, as would procurement services, which were under the Purchase and Transportation Division.

60. It went without saying that a reduction of human resources by approximately 30 per cent would affect not only peace-keeping missions, the Department of Peace-keeping Operations and the Department of Administration and Management but also Member States. The verification and calculation of amounts due to Member States for troops which they provided to the United Nations and the payment of those amounts would be further delayed (activities under the Peace-keeping Financing Division and Treasury).

61. The impact of the decisions contemplated on various services in the Department of Administration and Management would therefore be very serious and that was regrettable. The proposal of the Secretary-General had been carefully thought out and specifically designed to avoid such a serious disruption of services. The Secretariat recognized the responsibility of the General Assembly under the Charter to approve the budget; however, it urged Member States represented in the General Assembly to weigh fully the consequences of their decision. It was the responsibility of the Secretary-General to see to it that the peace-keeping missions were provided with adequate backstopping support; that must also be recognized. The Secretary-General must have a certain amount of flexibility in order to administer an integrated backstopping capacity. He therefore sincerely hoped that Member States fully appreciated the difficulties created by the proposed decision, which would adversely affect the sound operation of the Secretariat. The Secretary-General wished to reserve his right to take necessary measures within his capacity to ensure adequate support for peace-keeping operations.

62. The CHAIRMAN proposed to Committee members that they should adopt draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.65.

63. Draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.65 was adopted.

64. Mrs. INCERA (Costa Rica), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that they attached great importance to the draft resolution which had just been adopted and hoped that it would lead to improved management of backstopping activities for peace-keeping operations.

65. During the consultations, the Coordinator had specified that the posts requested by the Secretary-General for the secretariat of the Advisory Committee had been approved. That should have been mentioned in the draft resolution. Notwithstanding that reservation, the Group of 77 and China supported the statement made by the Rapporteur in introducing draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.65.

66. Mr. OWADE (Kenya) agreed wholeheartedly with the statement made by the representative of Costa Rica and stressed the temporary nature of the support account. Like the Ugandan delegation, he would appreciate information on the

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unjust fate of staff members with permanent contracts who were assigned to support account posts on their return from mission, to the detriment of their career prospects. Whether it lasted more than two years or less than two years, an assignment to a peace-keeping mission should be subject to the same rules as those applied in similar cases to civil servants of Member States. His delegation hoped that an end would be put to that anomaly, as the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management had promised. It reserved the right to raise the question again at a later date if necessary.

67. Mr. GOKHALE (India) endorsed the statement made by the representative of Costa Rica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

68. While taking note of the views of the Controller, the Indian delegation was nevertheless aware that the Organization was experiencing a crisis of payments; indeed that had necessitated the current painful restructuring. As the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management had pointed out, more and more Governments were trying to accomplish more with less and the Organization should follow their example. He was certain that the Department of Administration and Management would be able to handle the difficulties entailed by the modest reduction in personnel that had just been decided upon.

69. In his presentation of resource estimates for the support account, the Secretary-General should have included all staff, including those on loan to the Organization. Regrettably that had not been done. His delegation noted that, despite the priority assigned to peace-keeping, more than 50 per cent of the posts in the Department of Peace-keeping Operations were financed by means other than through assessed contributions. It hoped that, in preparing his proposals for the 12-month period beginning 1 July 1997, the Secretary-General would start from the assumption that all support posts would be financed from budget appropriations, and that he would leave to the Member States the task of deciding whether that should be so, and if not, how many of those posts should be financed by means other than through assessed contributions.

70. In General Assembly resolution 48/226 C, the Secretary-General had been requested to submit a report on the provision of personnel by Member States on loan to the Secretariat. Regrettably, three years had elapsed and the report had yet to be published. His delegation hoped that the report would be presented within the allotted time, and would follow very closely the measures taken by the Secretariat in that regard, especially those called for in paragraphs 8 and 13 of the draft resolution.

71. Mr. KELLY (Ireland) said that the only reason his delegation had not opposed the adoption of the draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.65 was because it had not wished to upset the consensus. It would have preferred to see the 355 posts requested by the Secretary-General approved because it was aware of the practical difficulties that the reductions requested by the Committee would entail. It had taken note of the observations made in that connection by the Controller on behalf of the Secretary-General.

72. Mr. TOYA (Japan) took note of the views expressed by the Controller, and said that his delegation would be willing to return to the question at a later date if necessary.

73. Mrs. ALMAO (New Zealand) supported the observations of the Irish delegation and took note of the comments of the Controller. Her delegation would take into account all the problems he had mentioned when the Committee considered the revised estimates requested in paragraph 5 of the draft resolution.

74. Mr. HANSON (Canada), associating himself with the views expressed by the representatives of Ireland and of New Zealand, said that his delegation had joined the consensus on the draft resolution reluctantly. Support for peace-keeping forces was so inadequate that his delegation was not convinced that the 355 posts that the Secretary-General had been proposing to finance through the support account would have been sufficient. It was disturbed to note that consensus had been reached on an even lower figure; it intended to follow the question closely and looked forward to taking it up again in due course.

75. Mr. ODAGA-JALOMAYO (Uganda) associated himself with the statement made by the representative of Costa Rica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, as well as with that made by the representative of Kenya. His delegation had joined the consensus reluctantly, and on the understanding that its questions would be answered promptly, as the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management had promised.

76. He shared the views of the Indian representative, especially regarding military personnel on loan.

77. Mr. GELBER (United States of America) supported the views expressed by the representatives of Canada, New Zealand and Japan, and expressed the hope that the Committee could eventually devote to that topic the attention it deserved.

78. Mr. PIKE (South Africa) noted with satisfaction that the Advisory Committee had begun to consider the financial requirements of the Brindisi logistical support base. However, the Secretariat had yet to present the report requested in General Assembly resolution 49/233, which was to include proposals concerning the introduction of an asset-management system. The Secretary-General was certainly expected to manage the Organization's assets as well as possible, but the Secretariat should nevertheless refrain from setting up a system that might eventually encroach upon the prerogative of the General Assembly to determine the policy it wished to follow in the matter.

79. Mr. GOKHALE (India), speaking in support of the South African delegation, said that, according to some reports, the Secretariat was setting up certain systems without informing the General Assembly of their content or financial implications. It was to be hoped that such rumours were without foundation.

80. Mr. MARCONDES DE CARVALHO (Brazil) said that Brazil shared the concerns of South Africa and India.

81. Mr. LOZINSKI (Russian Federation) supported the views expressed by the representatives of South Africa, India and Brazil. Asset management and accounting had to be efficient and transparent, but the Secretariat should not take such measures without the approval of the General Assembly.

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82. Ms. RODRIGUEZ-ABASCAL (Cuba) shared the concerns expressed by South Africa, India, Brazil and the Russian Federation. She hoped that the Secretary-General's next report would take note of the questions raised by the representatives of Uganda and Kenya. Finally, she supported the position taken by the representative of Costa Rica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

83. Mr. MAZEMO (Zimbabwe) wholeheartedly supported the views of the five speakers who had preceded him, and stressed that the determination of an asset-management policy was the prerogative of the General Assembly.

84. Mrs. EMERSON (Portugal) supported the views expressed by the representatives of Ireland, New Zealand and Canada regarding the statement of the Controller. It would also be appropriate to point out, at that time, that when recruiting staff whose posts were financed through the support account, the Secretary-General should avail himself of the prerogative conferred upon him by Article 101, paragraph 3 of the Charter and should select persons possessing the "highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity".

85. Mr. FATTAH (Egypt) said that he fully supported the views of the Group of 77, and China, Kenya (regarding the redeployment of staff members at the end of a mission), India (replying to the Controller's statement) and South Africa.

86. Ms. PEÑA (Mexico) said that she supported the observations made, inter alia, by South Africa, India, Brazil, Russia, Cuba and Zimbabwe.

AGENDA ITEM 149: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE OFFICE OF INTERNAL OVERSIGHT SERVICES (continued) (A/C.5/50/L.45)

Draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.45

87. Mrs. EMERSON (Portugal) introduced draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.45, the result of a consensus, and recommended that the Committee should adopt it without a vote.

88. Draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.45 was adopted.

AGENDA ITEM 159: HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT (continued) (A/C.5/50/L.46 and L.68-L.70)

89. The CHAIRMAN said that the Coordinating Committee for International Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations System had submitted a statement to the Committee, transmitted by its Chairman in a letter dated 29 May 1996.

90. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to adopt draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.46, the result of informal consultations.

91. Draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.46 was adopted.

Draft decision A/C.5/50/L.68

92. Mrs. EMERSON (Portugal) said that by draft decision A/C.5/50/L.68 the General Assembly would defer to its fifty-first session consideration of the

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report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat and the staff list, as well as the reports on the costs of staff representation activities and the reasonable number of hours which should be devoted to such activities. It was understood that, in the meantime, proposals concerning the number of hours and the full-time secondment of the second Vice-Chairman of the Staff Committee at New York would not be implemented. The Secretary-General would submit a detailed report at the fifty-first session indicating the direct and indirect costs of those activities and containing replies to questions raised by members of the Committee.

93. Draft decision A/C.5/50/L.68 was adopted.

94. Mrs. EMERSON (Portugal) introduced draft decision A/C.5/50/L.69, on which delegations had reached a consensus in informal consultations.

95. Draft decision A/C.5/50/L.69 was adopted.

Draft decision A/C.5/50/L.70

96. Mrs. EMERSON (Portugal) read out draft decision A/C.5/50/L.70, on which delegations had reached a consensus after lengthy consultations.

97. Draft decision A/C.5/50/L.70 was adopted.

98. Mrs. SHEAROUSE (United States) said that her delegation had joined the consensus only because it was clearly stipulated in paragraph 2 that no further derogation would be granted to the provisions of paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 49/222 B. She awaited with interest the report which the Secretary-General would submit at the beginning of October, in the hope that it would contain proposals on the general principles to be adopted in order to ensure that all retirees received equal treatment, in the interests of the Organization and of the retirees themselves.

99. Mr. STÖCKL (Germany) said that he supported the statement made by the representative of the United States. His own delegation had joined the consensus although the Secretariat had not yet indicated whether retirees working in the translation and interpretation services received the same remuneration as their counterparts in other services - based on the United Nations salary scale - or whether they enjoyed the same conditions as temporary personnel. Since it believed that all retirees should be treated in the same way, his delegation hoped that the Secretariat's next report would contain the information requested.

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AGENDA ITEM 160: FINANCING OF THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL TRIBUNAL FOR THE PROSECUTION OF PERSONS RESPONSIBLE FOR GENOCIDE AND OTHER SERIOUS VIOLATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW COMMITTED IN THE TERRITORY OF RWANDA AND RWANDAN CITIZENS RESPONSIBLE FOR GENOCIDE AND OTHER SUCH VIOLATIONS COMMITTED IN THE TERRITORY OF NEIGHBOURING STATES BETWEEN 1 JANUARY AND 31 DECEMBER 1994
(continued) (A/C.5/50/L.63)

Draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.63

100. Mr. HANSON (Canada) introduced draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.63, to which two changes should be made. In the seventh line of paragraph 2, after the word "for", the words "the period from 1 April to 31 December" should be added. Paragraph 9 should be replaced by the following text: "Requests the Secretary-General to entrust the Office of Internal Oversight Services with undertaking, without prejudice to its programme of work, an inspection of the International Tribunal, with a view to identifying problems and recommending measures to enhance the efficient utilization of resources, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-first session;". The draft resolution had been agreed by consensus and he proposed that it should be adopted without a vote.

101. Draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.63, as orally revised, was adopted.

AGENDA ITEM 167: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA (continued) (A/C.5/50/L.58)

Draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.58

102. Mr. ABELIAN (Armenia) introduced draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.58, which reflected the consensus reached in informal consultations, and proposed that it should be adopted without a vote.

103. Draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.58 was adopted.

AGENDA ITEM 168: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS TRANSITIONAL ADMINISTRATION FOR EASTERN SLOVENIA, BARANJA AND WESTERN SIRMUM (continued) (A/C.5/50/L.57)

Draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.57

104. Mr. ABELIAN (Armenia) introduced draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.57, which reflected the consensus reached in informal consultations, and proposed that it should be adopted without a vote.

105. Draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.57 was adopted.

AGENDA ITEM 169: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS PREVENTIVE DEPLOYMENT FORCE
(continued) (A/C.5/50/L.59)

Draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.59

106. Mr. ABELIAN (Armenia), introducing draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.59, said that the text represented the consensus that had been reached during informal consultations and proposed that it should be adopted without a vote.

107. Draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.59 was adopted.

Rights of reply

108. Mr. ZAHID (Morocco), speaking under agenda item 125 in exercise of the right of reply, recalled that, contrary to the allegations of the Algerian delegation, his delegation had shown maximum flexibility during the informal consultations. Having noted that a statement in the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) was liable to be misconstrued, it had requested that the Secretariat should correct the involuntary error. It was in that connection that it had cited an extract from the report of 24 November 1995, in which the Secretary-General examined the reasons for the delay in the referendum process. The Algerian delegation had objected to the correction being made in formal meeting. During consultations, his delegation had submitted an amendment. Following the intervention of friendly countries, it had agreed to withdraw the amendment on the understanding that the coordinator would make a statement. Algeria had again opposed that solution. Recognizing that the coordinator wished to have a consensus, his delegation had yielded. Its request, however, had been fully in keeping with practice: when there were errors in a report of the Secretary-General, the Secretariat issued a corrigendum, as it had done for the most recent report of the Security Council on the situation in Western Sahara.

109. The Algerian delegation was attempting to lay the blame for the delays in the voter identification process on Morocco. First of all, that was not the issue before the Fifth Committee. Secondly, the reason for the delay was the attitude of the Frente POLISARIO, which had rejected first the criteria adopted in 1991 and then the compromise proposed by the Secretary-General. The latter had then presented an interpretation of the compromise which Morocco had accepted. The Frente POLISARIO had first rejected and then had finally accepted that interpretation, but not before instructing its tribal chiefs to object to criteria 4 and 5, the effect of which was to slightly increase the size of the electorate. Morocco wished to give all persons originating from Western Sahara the right to participate in the referendum. The Frente POLISARIO, on the contrary, wished to restrict that right as much as possible by linking it to the 1974 census, whose defects had been recognized by all. The Moroccan requests were intended to remedy those defects; the United Nations had taken note of them and had declared that they should be given consideration. For its part, the Frente POLISARIO had refused to participate in the identification of certain Saharans originating from tribes surveyed under codes H and J.

110. Mr. MOKTEFI (Algeria), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the turn taken by the debate in the Committee on item 125 was entirely due

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to the attitude of the Moroccan delegation, which had first made an unheard-of request of the Secretariat: the latter would have had to abandon its neutrality and amend one of its reports for the sole purpose of supporting the position taken by a delegation which was party to a conflict. Employing restraint, his delegation had recalled in formal meeting that the political aspects of the issue were for the Security Council and the Fourth Committee to consider. It had reserved the right to take the floor at a later stage to present the position of its Government, as the Moroccan delegation had done at the fifty-sixth meeting.

111. During the informal consultations, Algeria had recalled that the Fifth Committee did not have the necessary information to enable it to take a fair and objective decision on a complex and sensitive issue and to make a value judgement on the political content of reports of the Secretary-General.

112. The Moroccan delegation's initiative sought to impose a singular, selective, partisan and tendentious interpretation of the reports of the Secretary-General and to accept it would have set an unfortunate and dangerous precedent. That was why his delegation was firmly against attempts at manipulation and disinformation. The introduction to which the Moroccan delegation objected was no more acceptable to his delegation. The latter, however, did not believe that it had the authority to request that a corrigendum should be issued, since it was of the view that the Secretariat should have complete freedom in drafting its reports.

113. Algeria was desirous of promoting peace in the Maghreb and sought to encourage a direct dialogue between the two parties to the conflict. The point raised by Morocco was very specific: it concerned the identification of three sub-groups which had not been considered during the 1974 Spanish census and whose Saharan character was therefore legitimately called into question by the Frente POLISARIO.

114. His delegation noted that it sufficed to refer to the most recent resolution of the Security Council to know who was responsible for the impasse. All through the debate on agenda item 125, it had merely defended the prerogatives of the Fifth Committee.

115. Mr. ZAHID (Morocco), replying to the representative of Algeria, said that the question of the corrigendum to the report of the Secretary-General concerned only Morocco and the Secretariat. Without the interference of Algeria, a corrigendum would have been issued, as justified by the extract of the report S/1995/986 to which the speaker had referred and the statement of the Secretary-General that MINURSO was required to consider all applications. Algeria had advanced the argument of the Fifth Committee's competence; it should have taken that into account and refrained from addressing the political aspects of the issue. The decision to which the Committee had arrived despite the problems created by the Algerian delegation was testimony to the willingness to negotiate which Morocco had demonstrated in the circumstances.

116. The representative of Algeria had declared that the Frente POLISARIO had doubts about the Saharan origins of certain persons. It was not for the Frente POLISARIO to say who was Saharan but the Identification Commission consisting of

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United Nations officials. Historically and legally, the Sahara belonged to Morocco. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) had declared that the Sahara was not an ownerless territory and that there were ties of allegiance between Morocco and the Sahara. Morocco had agreed to the organization of the referendum in order to confirm the Moroccan character of the Sahara.

117. Mr. MOKTEFI (Algeria) reiterated that the Secretariat's statements were in no way shared by Algeria. In the latter's view, responsibility for the impasse in which the peace process found itself lay directly with the Kingdom of Morocco and not with the two parties as stated in the reports of the Secretary-General. He wondered why, among all the reports, it was necessary to draw special attention to that of 24 November 1995.

118. The Sahara belonged not to Morocco but to the Saharans. The Moroccan delegation gave a totally false interpretation of the opinion of the International Court of Justice. The resolutions of the Fourth Committee were unambiguous: it was a problem of decolonization and of the right of the Saharan people to self-determination. The statements by the representative of Morocco clearly showed that Morocco was an obstacle to the peace process. It was evident that if the referendum were held, it would result in the independence of the Saharan people and not to any form of incorporation into the Kingdom of Morocco.

COMPLETION OF THE WORK OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE AT THE SECOND PART OF THE RESUMED FIFTIETH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

119. The CHAIRMAN declared that the Fifth Committee had completed its work for the second part of the resumed fiftieth session of the General Assembly. He wished to inform members of the Committee that the third part of the resumed fiftieth session would be held from 9 to 13 September 1996.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.